University of Toronto
Department of Political Science

POLITICAL SCIENCE 2405/442 TOPICS IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS:
PROTEST AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA
Winter 2022

Instructor: Martha Balaguera, PhD, Assistant Professor
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In-person seminar meetings: Thursdays, 2-4 p.m., LA 340
Online seminar meetings (January): Thursdays, 2-4 p.m. (Eastern time) on Zoom
Virtual office hours: Fridays 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. on Zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Protests and social movements by a range of social actors have historically shaped politics and the political in Latin America. In recent decades, collective struggles by minoritized groups have multiplied, creating a force of resistance with far-reaching implications in the region and beyond. They have exposed the limits of democracy as something instituted from above. They have contested, negotiated with or carved out spaces of participation in different visions of development. They have defied elites’ repressive power and the exploitation of Latin American peoples in the international political economy. They have refused long-standing hierarchies and exclusions. They have expanded political imaginaries and enacted change.

This course examines the generative political and epistemological work of Latin American protest and social movements, focusing on the late 20th century to the present day. It focuses on key threads of subaltern organizing and mobilizing in the region during this time frame, including revolutionary, feminist, solidarity, decolonial, anti-racist, body-centered, ontological and anti-extractivist struggles in the final stages of the Cold War, under neoliberal hegemony, and in post-neoliberal settings. These threads are studied alongside major theoretical innovations in this interdisciplinary field of knowledge in comparative and transnational perspective. Especial attention is given to the intersecting politics of coloniality, race, gender and class.

Readings are drawn from different scholarly traditions and disciplines — social movement theory, critical race theory, transnational feminisms, cultural studies, performance studies, black political thought, decolonial thought, political science, history, anthropology, sociology, communication, education and journalism. We will read texts that theorize protest and social movements in regional perspective addressing Abya Yala, Afro-Latin America, the Southern Cone or the Americas, as well as case studies and comparisons about Nicaragua, El Salvador, Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Honduras and Chile. Recommended readings offer additional resources about other countries and sub-regions.

In considering a variety of theoretical approaches and empirical cases, we will ask broad questions, including the following: How are “protest” and “social movements” defined in different contexts
and what alternative concepts shed light on the collective political struggles of Latin American peoples? How do scholars of protest and social movements theorize the region’s political realities? What structural, institutional, and cultural factors contribute to the emergence of protest and social movements? What is the relationship between protest/social movements and democratic citizenship? How do protest/social movements relate to state institutions, civil society organizations, and international actors? How have social movements resisted or negotiated participation in neoliberal and post-neoliberal models of development? What kinds of identities and alternative visions of the world have been articulated by protest and social movements in Latin America? What are some strategic, discursive and intellectual innovations present in contemporary Latin American movements, and what has been their impact at different levels?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate the conceptual, theoretical, normative and methodological foundations of empirical studies of protest and social movements in Latin America.
2. Explain the conditions precipitating the emergence of protest and social movements in contemporary Latin America.
3. Assess the political as well as intellectual contributions of contemporary actors in struggle and social movements across the region.
4. Analyze cases of protest and social movements in comparative and transnational perspective.
5. Employ an intersectional lens to assess the political realities and agency of minoritized groups in Latin America.
6. Formulate research questions about protest and social movements in Latin America and articulate responses to such questions grounded in existing theories and empirical evidence.
7. Communicate arguments clearly in a variety of formats, both in writing and through oral participation and presentations.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required

Most article-length readings can be accessed through permanent library links or scanned PDFs when available. These will be provided on the weekly Quercus “Modules.”

The list of required readings is subject to change. A relevant announcement will be published on Quercus when necessary.


Note: the UofT library may limit the number of users who can access online books at any given time. Please plan ahead and make appropriate arrangements to access the readings opportunistically.

**Recommended**

Recommended materials are included in the course schedule. Whenever possible, permanent library links are provided.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Course requirements are intended to meet the learning objectives outlined above.

**In-class participation (ongoing, 20%).** This course will run as a research seminar, and its quality depends on everyone’s doing all the assigned readings and coming to class prepared to engage actively in meaningful discussion. Seminar participants will be addressing the readings from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds, and it is crucial that discussions are conducted in a respectful manner, without silencing those who may not agree or who do not have extensive prior knowledge of the subject or the region. (Learning outcomes emphasized: 1-5 and 7).

**Reading responses (three times during the term, 15%).** Three times during the term, you will submit a 1-page, single-spaced reading response on Quercus before the seminar meets. Choose weeks among the following:

- First response paper: Week 2, 3 or 4
- Second response paper: Week 5, 6 or 8
- Third response paper: Week 9, 10 or 11

Reading responses are neither formal papers nor summaries but short, thoughtful engagements with the assigned readings. You should aim to identify common themes or contradictions among the readings, establish connections with previous discussions, express agreement or disagreement with the arguments being presented, or apply concepts and ideas learned to current events. To receive full credit for each response paper, you must submit it in a timely manner and share your ideas during class. Grading criteria: 1) thorough familiarity with the assigned material; 2) engagement with the assigned material at a level of abstraction higher than summarizing, e.g., by evaluating arguments, analyzing connections and implications, applying concepts and theories. (Learning outcomes emphasized: 1-5 and 7).

**Presentation of assigned material (one time during the term, 15%).** You will sign up to present and facilitate one discussion during the term, working with a partner or two. This will involve the following:

- a) posting at least three questions for class discussion two days in advance of class (by Tuesday at 2 pm during the week you are presenting);
b) preparing a brief presentation — 10 minutes per presenter — that pulls together the readings into a critical framework, relates them to previous weeks’ readings and raises questions for class discussion;

c) facilitating discussion in a creative way, maintaining continuity and coherence.

You may use a variety of discussion techniques, but at least part of the time should be spent in whole-group discussion. (Learning outcomes emphasized: 1-5 and 7).

Blog (ongoing, 10%). The purpose of this assignment is to help you connect your topic of interest (which you will address in the final paper) to the material being covered in class each week, so that you are in a better position to formulate and answer a research question independently. You will create a blog with at least 5 posts (submit by Monday after our seminar meets), where you will discuss the links between what you learned on your selected weeks and your topic of interest. Blog posts should be succinct (recommended length: 250 words) as well as include references, images (with adequate attribution) and hyperlinks to primary and secondary sources whenever possible. Blogs will be accessible to all seminar participants. You should also respond to your peers with questions, comments or suggestions at least twice during the term. (Learning outcome emphasized: 6 and 7).

Final paper (paper proposal + draft bibliography due on February 11, 5%; final paper presentation on March 31 or April 7, 10%; final paper due on April 8, 25%). You will write a final paper that either 1) focuses on a particular empirical case; or 2) addresses a particular problem or issue in the literature. The paper can take the form of a critical review of the literature (option A), a grant proposal (option B) or a piece of original empirical research (option C). Detailed guidelines will be provided. For seminar participants registered in POL 442, the paper should be 12 pages in length (3,600 words). For seminar participants registered in POL 2405, the paper should be 20 pages in length (6,000 words). You should submit a 1-page paper proposal plus a draft bibliography by Week 5 (February 11). You will then do a 10-minute presentation with your main conclusions (option A), research design (option B) or findings (option C) on March 31 or April 7. Finally, you will submit your paper on April 8 via Quercus. (Learning outcomes emphasized: 4-7).

IMPORTANT DATES

January 23. Last day to enroll in S courses.
February 11. Paper proposal and draft bibliography due in class.
February 21-25. Reading Week.
March 14. Last day to drop S courses without academic penalty.
March 31 and April 7. Final presentations.
April 8. Classes end. Final paper due on Quercus.

LATE AND MISSED WORK POLICY

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) of the total mark. Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be assigned a grade of zero.

If you miss class the day you are scheduled to present, you will be assigned a grade of zero for the presentation.
Cases of emergency should be appropriately reported through the Absence Declaration on ACORN.

**RE-MARKING POLICY**

If you do not agree with a grade you obtained in the course, you can appeal it by following the procedure detailed below:

- Before making your request, be aware of the fact that re-marking your assignments can result in a higher or lower grade.
- Your request should be submitted in writing, no later than a week after receiving your grade.
- In your email, explain in a detailed manner the reasons why you disagree with your grade. You should specifically respond to the feedback obtained and the relevant prompt or guidelines provided for assignment.
- You will hear back from your instructor within a week after you submitted your request.

**REMOTE LEARNING**

POL2405/442 will run remotely in January. During this time, we will hold synchronous and asynchronous activities on Quercus and Zoom. While we may not always meet for the entire 2-hour duration of our designated time, students should be available for synchronous activities to be held on Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m., Eastern time.

Office hours will be held via Zoom on Fridays between 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Eastern time for the entire academic term.

**Zoom**

Students are strongly encouraged to share their webcam during our synchronous meetings. For students who are presenting in the weeks when we are meeting remotely, camera usage is required.

**COURSE COMMUNICATIONS**

I will communicate with you via your _@mail.utoronto.ca_ email address. It is your responsibility to check your institutional email frequently. When writing to me, please include “POL2405” or “POL442” in the subject line, followed by a subject line that summarizes the purpose of your message. Please allow two working days to hear back from me, unless an automatic response instructs to proceed otherwise. In all electronic communications, use appropriate salutation and professional language.

**EQUITY STATEMENT**

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behavior that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.
CODE OF CONDUCT

During the first week of classes, we will discuss and create agreements about the course code of conduct. It will then be posted on Quercus for everyone’s reference.

CONTENT WARNING

The content and discussion in this course will often deal with different forms of discrimination, oppression and violence. Much of this content will be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. The instructor will strive to make this class a space where all participants can engage empathetically and thoughtfully with difficult content. Students are encouraged to make use of office hours to discuss for additional support.

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with diverse learning needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and Accessibility Services as soon as possible. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

The staff members of Accessibility Services are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. Their contact information is included below.

Accessibility Services
455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400
Phone: 416-978-8060
E-mail: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca

NOTICE OF COLLECTION

The University of Toronto respects your privacy. The information on medical certificates is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971. It is collected for the purpose of administering accommodations for academic purposes based on medical grounds. The department will maintain a record of all medical certificates received. At all times, it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you have questions, please refer to www.utoronto.ca/privacy or contact the University’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 416-946-5835. Address: Room 201, McMurrich Bldg., 12 Queen’s Park Crescent, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A1.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. Advice on writing at the University of Toronto, and guidance on how to cite sources and how not to plagiarize can be found at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources and http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.
Academic integrity in an online environment

Students are expected to maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting. Potential academic offences in a digital context include, but are not limited to:

- Accessing unauthorized resources (search engines, chat rooms, Reddit, etc.) for assessments.
- Using technological aids (e.g. software) beyond what is listed as permitted in an assessment.
- Posting test, essay, or exam questions to message boards or social media.
- Creating, accessing, and sharing assessment questions and answers in virtual “course groups.”
- Working collaboratively, in-person or online, with others on assessments that are expected to be completed individually.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional sources at the University of Toronto.

TURNITIN

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Turnitin opt-out option

Students may opt out of Turnitin for submitting their assignments. To do so, they should notify the instructor via email no later than January 27, 2022. Assignments should then be submitted via email in a format that makes text recognizable and accessible.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Introductions and initial provocations

Recommended readings:

Week 2. January 20
Revolution in the final stages of the Cold War (Nicaragua and El Salvador)

Required readings:
Recommended reading (Guatemala and Nicaragua):

Week 3. January 27
Feminist struggles in the age of revolution (Nicaragua and El Salvador)

Required readings:

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1 Course materials included in this schedule are subject to change. Students will be notified of any changes at least a week prior to the class affected by such changes.

**Recommended reading (Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Southern Cone, Mexico and Guatemala):**


**Recommended films (Nicaragua and El Salvador):**


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**Week 4. February 3**

Transnational advocacy and solidarity (the Americas with emphasis on Argentina, Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua)

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and the United States):**


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**Week 5. February 10**

The Zapatista rebellion (Chiapas, Mexico)

**Required readings:**


Recommended readings (Chiapas, Mexico):

February 11. Final paper proposal and draft bibliography due on Quercus.

Week 6. February 17
Possibilities and limitations of neoliberal citizenship (Bolivia and Colombia)

Required readings:

Recommended readings (Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and Brazil):

Week 7. February 24
Reading week

February 21, Family Day Holiday. University closed.

February 21-25, Reading week.
Week 8. March 3
Afro-descendant struggles across the region (the Americas with emphasis on Brazil and Mexico)

Required readings:

Recommended readings (the Americas, Brazil, Colombia):

Week 9. March 10
Struggles for life and the territory (Abya Yala/Afro-Latin America with a focus on Ecuador, Honduras and Colombia)

Required readings:

Recommended readings (Ecuador, Venezuela):
Week 10. March 17
The Green Wave: abortion, reproductive justice and body politics (Southern Cone with a focus on Argentina)

Required reading:


Recommended readings (Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador):


Week 11. March 24
Performance, cuirness, art (Chile, United States/Mexico)

Required readings:


Recommended reading (Bolivia):

Week 12. March 31
Final presentations

Presentations held in class.

Week 13. April 7
Final presentations

Presentations held in class.

April 8. Final paper due on Quercus.